

SIRS,—The reference on p. 457 of the July number of ‘The Ibis’ to Dr. Girtanner’s paper on the Bearded Vulture (*Gypætus barbatus*) has induced me to record having seen one of these birds near Finhaut, in Canton Valais, Switzerland, on 13th October, 1898.

Snow had fallen in the preceding night, and the mountains were white above 5000 feet. As I climbed through the woods, at about that height, one of these grand birds came towards me, sailing over the tree-tops, and passed directly above my head, quite near me. Round and round it wheeled, in great circles, sometimes disappearing behind the trees, then coming over me again, rising higher and higher, until it passed over the top of Bel-Oiseau mountain. Being unarmed, I had to be content with having “seen” the bird, although within shooting-distance when it first passed me.

Yours &c.,

PERCY E. FREKE.

7 Limes Road, Folkestone,
August 4th, 1899.

SIRS,—To the notes of Mr. C. W. Andrews on remains of *Pelecanus crispus* from the lake-dwellings of Glastonbury, you have appended a footnote (*anteà*, p. 352) stating that, “according to Mr. A. C. Chapman, the Pelican is still to be found wild in West Jutland.” Danish naturalists cannot allow such a statement to pass, and already we have protested (‘Ibis,’ 1895, p. 294; Vidensk. Medd. Naturhist. Foren. Kjöbenhavn, 1895, p. 60). One or the other species of Pelican (the species alluded to by Mr. Chapman was *P. onocrotalus*) may perhaps be seen in Denmark as the rarest of stragglers; we have no indisputable evidence of it; but that “the Pelican” is *not* “still to be found wild” is beyond all doubt.

Yours &c.,

HERLUF WINGE.

Universitets Zoologiske Museum,
Kjöbenhavn, August 8th, 1899.

The Bird-Collections of the British Museum.—From the Report on the British Museum for the year ending March

31st, 1899, we extract the following very satisfactory account of the progress of the National Collection of Birds during the past Parliamentary year :—

One of the most valuable of the donations to the Bird department during the year 1898 was that made by Dr. W. T. Blanford, F.R.S. 1344 specimens have been selected from his collection, which contained a series of birds from Quetta obtained by the late Sir Oliver B. St. John, as well as a set of the specimens obtained by Dr. Blanford himself in Sind and Central India. These collections, especially those from the last-named locality, were very valuable as supplementing the great Hume collection already presented to the Trustees by Mr. Allan Hume, C.B.

Mr. R. McD. Hawker, during his recent expedition to Somaliland, took with him a collector on purpose to preserve specimens of Mammalia and Birds for the Museum. His donation of 160 birds was a most interesting addition to the Museum series, and contained the types of 4 new species and examples of 9 species not previously represented in the Museum Collection.

The collection of birds bequeathed by the late Mr. Henry Seebohm in 1896 has now been registered, and the specimens have been placed in the bird-cabinets. This collection consisted of 13,460 specimens, with 139 types and examples of 39 species new to the collection of the British Museum. The donation is one of the most important ever received by the Trustees of the Museum. For several years past Mr. Seebohm had given portions of his collection of birds to the Museum to assist the preparation of the 'Catalogue,' and the whole of his magnificent collection of eggs had also been presented by him to that establishment. The series bequeathed by him, however, contained the results of his expeditions to Siberia and various countries in Europe, the Swinhoe collection of Chinese birds, the Pryer collection of Japanese birds, Doerries' collections from the Amur, besides others from India, Borneo, and various portions of the globe.

A further instalment of the Salvin-Godman collection,

amounting to 3408 specimens, has been received and registered, and the registration and incorporation of the Hargitt collection of Woodpeckers have been completed.

The lamented death of Mr. Osbert Salvin, F.R.S., has deprived the Museum of one of its most valued workers, as his unrivalled knowledge of the South American avifauna rendered his aid in the determination of species simply inestimable. Mr. F. D. Godman, F.R.S., the co-author with Mr. Salvin of the great work, the 'Biologia Centrali-Americana,' has, since the death of the latter gentleman, given much of his time to the registration of the collections of birds presented by him to the Museum, and it may be confidently asserted that in the next Annual Report the completion of this huge task will be announced.

It must be noted that as these additional donations of specimens are incorporated in the bird-cabinets, the entire collection is revised and set in order, the specimens arranged in glass-topped boxes and labelled, so that the collection should be made of complete use for the purpose of reference.

During the past year great progress has been made with the rearrangement of the collections of eggs and skeletons. The former work has been entrusted to Mr. Eugene W. Oates, an accomplished oologist, who has had an experience of thirty years' field-work in Burma, and is well known as the editor of the second edition of Mr. Allan Hume's 'Nests and Eggs of Indian Birds.' Mr. Oates is now engaged in re-arranging and cataloguing the collection of birds' eggs in the Museum, and during the year 1898 no fewer than 15,000 specimens have been dealt with. Similar satisfactory progress has been made with the rearrangement and determination of the collection of birds' skeletons, for during the past year all those of the Penguins, Petrels, Pelicans, and Cormorants, as well as the Ducks, have been examined and carefully identified by Mr. W. P. Pycraft and arranged in boxes. A number of doubtfully identified or imperfect skeletons have been eliminated from the collection, while many beautifully prepared specimens have been added to the series.

The rearrangement of the specimens in the Public Gallery has made great progress, and nearly one-half of this section is now completed. The most competent taxidermists have been employed, and every effort has been made to render the specimens exhibited in the Public Gallery as true to nature as can be achieved by the art of the bird-stuffer. The mounting of the specimens has been mainly executed by Mr. J. Cullingford, of Durham, and Mr. E. Pickhardt, of London.

Simultaneously with the reorganization of the exhibition series in the Bird Gallery, the badly mounted and unsuitable specimens have been removed, and have either been transferred to the duplicates, or, when of historical value, carefully unmounted and incorporated in the study series.

The groups illustrating the nesting-habits of British birds are now so nearly complete that additions to this series can be expected to take place only at rare intervals. During 1898 the nests of the Grey Lag Goose and the Common Partridge have been added; as well as a beautiful pair of Glaucous Gulls with their nestlings, procured on Waigats Island by Mr. Henry J. Pearson, and presented by him to the Museum.

The actual number of specimens registered during the past year has been 30,144. All these have been incorporated, and the recent acquisitions have been neatly labelled. Much assistance in the latter work has been voluntarily given by Miss Dorothy Bate and Mr. Robert Reid.

The following account of the additions to the National Collection of birds is extracted from the same report:—

The total number of additions to this group is 23,710, of which the following deserve especial mention:—

The Seebohm bequest of 13,460 specimens. Another instalment of the Salvin-Godman collection, containing 3408 specimens, additional to those mentioned in previous reports. The Blanford collection, consisting of 1344 specimens from various parts of the Indian Empire; presented by Dr. W. T. Blanford, F.R.S.

33 birds from Franz-Josef Land, obtained during the

Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition, and presented by F. G. Jackson, Esq. 678 eggs of Chilian birds, bequeathed by the late H. Berkeley James, Esq. 76 specimens from the Philippine Islands, collected by [the late] Mr. John Whitehead; purchased. 42 birds from Somaliland, including the type of *Caprimulgus torridus*, a new species of Nightjar; presented by J. Bennett-Stanford, Esq. 97 birds from N.W. Fohkien, including the types of seven new species; presented by C. B. Rickett and J. D. La Touche, Esqs. A nest of *Quiscalus crassirostris* from Jamaica; presented by Lady Blake. A pair of Glaucous Gulls (*Larus glaucus*) with nestlings, as well as several nestlings of the Little Stint and other Arctic birds; presented by H. J. Pearson, Esq. 19 birds from Somaliland; presented by C. V. A. Peel, Esq. A specimen of the rare Bornean Cuckoo Falcon (*Baza borneensis*) from Sarawak; presented by Charles Hose, Esq. 25 birds from St. Aignan Island, Louisiade Archipelago, including three species new to the collection; collected by Mr. A. S. Meek; purchased. 164 birds from Flores, including 8 species new to the collection, 86 birds from Waingapo, and 90 birds from Borneo, containing many rare and unrepresented species; obtained by the late Mr. A. H. Everett; purchased. 232 birds from Bering Sea; presented by G. E. H. Barrett-Hamilton, Esq. A series of the Central European Nutcracker (*Nucifraga relictæ*) from Austria; received in exchange from Victor Ritter von Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen. 200 specimens from Somaliland, including 7 types of new species and 8 other species new to the collection; obtained by E. Lort Phillips, Esq.; purchased. 18 birds from the Chin Hills, Burma, including the type of a new Pheasant (*Gennæus wickhami*). 44 birds, 15 nests and eggs, 13 skeletons from Christmas Island; collected by Mr. C. W. Andrews; presented by Sir John Murray, K.C.B. 443 specimens of birds from Canada; received in exchange from J. H. Fleming, Esq., of Toronto.

The types of two new Pigeons (*Petrophassa rufipennis* and *Ptilopus alligator*) from Alligator River, N.W. Australia; received in exchange from Professor R. Collett. 40 specimens

of Larks and other birds from Morocco and Tunis, including 3 very rare species, new to the collection; presented by J. I. S. Whitaker, Esq. 8 birds from Pará, including the rare *Psophia obscura*, new to the collection; presented by Dr. E. A. Goeldi. 74 birds from the Khin-gan Mountains, Mongolia; presented by Dr. Donaldson Smith and J. E. and G. L. Farnum, Esqs. 53 birds from Mozambique; presented by H. S. H. Cavendish, Esq. 24 birds from the Owen Stanley Mountains, S. E. New Guinea; purchased. 118 birds from British Guiana; presented by Dr. J. J. Quelch and F. V. McConnell, Esq. 72 birds from North Borneo; collected by J. B. Bell, Esq.; purchased. The nest and eggs of Prince Albert's Rifle-bird (*Craspedophora alberti*) from Queensland; received in exchange from D. Le Souëf, Esq. 61 birds from Southern Somaliland and the Lake Rudolf district; presented by Lord Delamere. 28 specimens from New Guinea, &c., including 5 species new to the collection; received in exchange from the Hon. Walter Rothschild, M.P. 93 birds from the Louisiade Archipelago, collected by Mr. A. S. Meek; purchased. 21 specimens of birds from Lahej, Southern Arabia, and 163 specimens from Somaliland, including types of 3 new species; presented by R. McD. Hawker, Esq. 238 birds from Nyasaland; presented by Alfred Sharpe, Esq., C.B. 66 birds from the Salisbury district in Mashonaland, including the type of *Stactolema sowerbyi*, a new species of Barbet; collected by Mr. J. S. Sowerby; purchased. 95 birds from Machako's, British East Africa; presented by Dr. S. L. Hinde. 18 birds from Central Australia; procured during the Horn Expedition, and presented by W. A. Horn, Esq. 77 specimens from Muscat, Arabia; presented by Surgeon-Lieut.-Colonel Jayakar. 21 birds from Mt. Albert Edward, S. E. New Guinea; purchased. 64 eggs of Gulls and Ducks from the Smölen Islands, N. Norway; presented by Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe.

Acquisition of Mr. H. E. Dresser's Collection of Birds by the Manchester Museum.—We take the following from the